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181 577 674 . . . they are so fond of taking other people's property that what one man obtains another will take from him, and he yields it without feeling aggrieved; the most he will do is to resist a little, then he loosens his hold of it and they remain friends. It appears as if among themselves their goods are held in common, and I believe they conceal as much as they can get possession of below the ground, for we never saw afterwards any of the things we gave them.

Legends often mention episodes in which persons who took things from others ran away to escape punishment. Modern natives steal among themselves as much as they pilfer foreigners. If they are detected they make no effort to keep the stolen goods, but quietly return it. They prefer to steal food which may be used without attracting undue attention, and they alter stolen clothes so that the legitimate owner cannot recognize them.

PUNISHMENT OF THEFT

685 The breaking down of the old order and the deposition of the old chiefs brought about, as a natural consequence, the destruction of ancient rules of justice. No tradition has been preserved as to the maintenance of justice in ancient times. Missionaries are silent on this subject, and the later voyagers had little opportunity to inquire into the functioning of the old institutions. Thomson (215, p. 473) tried to obtain details concerning laws but had to be content with vague and contradictory statements.

Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 131) says in regard to punishment for theft:

685 691 As for their fellow countrymen, it was very different, it is true that they robbed one another as much as they could, but secretly. But woe to the thief caught in the very act by a victim stronger than himself. He might expect a terrible vengeance. Here is an instance of the barbarious deeds which might happen in such occasions. Before our arrival a young boy had stolen a chicken from the chief of Hotu-iti. The chief took the poor child by the foot with one hand and with the other he seized his thigh and then putting the leg on his knee he broke it as if it was a piece of wood.

Geiseler (87, p. 28) remarks that, inasmuch as there was no authority vested in the chiefs, the victim of a theft had to mete out justice himself:

This happens in most of the cases in such a way that the robbed person as soon as he discovers the right thief takes back what has been stolen or something else as compensation, asking for satisfaction amid loud shoutings. Very seldom do they resort to beatings or fights for this motive. A chief would in that way make justice for himself if somebody steals from him. They can never punish others for this crime.

Thomson (215, p. 465) probably on the authority of Salmon, writes:

Thieves caught in the act might be beaten, knocked about, and the aggressor was permitted to offer no resistance in the efforts to escape, although he might be the largest and the most powerful. Before the retaliation could be enforced, the theft had to be proven and fixed beyond question, then the plundered individual here was at liberty to recover the value of the loss from any property available belonging to the robber, and in the event of the value not being recovered, articles of value could be destroyed to equalize the amount. Retaliation for theft could be enforced by the weak and feeble against the strong and powerful, and any resistance would call to their aid the entire community.

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My experiences with modern natives of Easter Island make me doubt the truth of this system of retaliation. Certainly the offended person would try to avenge the theft by any method possible, but it seems hardly probable that the thief would accept his punishment if he were the stronger.

At the present time, a robbed person may try to identify the thief and recover the lost property. A thief caught in the act of stealing is punished. Many natives now go to the Chilean Subdelegado to complain, although they know he can do little. The captain of the training ship, *Baquedano*, is the supreme authority to which the islanders appeal. He stays on the island only a few days and metes justice according to his temper or fancy.

VENGEANCE

Persons who felt deeply injured or unjustly treated were sometimes overwhelmed by madness (*heva*) which led them to commit the most daring deeds. A man or woman who yielded to this state of fury ate soil (*kai te oone*), ran to-and-fro with a rat in his mouth, and tried to harm those who had offended him. "I am eating soil" is still a common expression to indicate anger or spite. These crises were considered temporary diseases. If a person in this state of anger recited an appropriate charm, he might succeed in killing the person who had aroused his wrath. (See the legend of Raraku, p. 370.)

Revenge was the most usual incentive for wars and feuds. Many tales and legends of Easter Island are concerned with details of revenge (*ati te kopeka*) taken by lineages or tribes for the murder of one of their members. According to information given me by the natives, the family of the murdered tried to kill the murderer, but if they did not succeed, any other person belonging to the culprit's family was killed. The victim's father or some other relative resorted to a special priest called *timo-ika* (chanter of the corpse) who performed certain rites to cause the murderer to die. Every lineage or subtribe had many such priests who carried out all rituals for revenge. This did not prevent the injured party from waging war or pursuing the culprit. The corpse of the dead man was put on the ahu and the *timo-ika* chanted spells, at the same time brandishing a pallet (*rapa-ika*). My informant gave rhythmic and gutteral sounds which he pretended were an imitation of the *timo-ika's* chant. The only words he remembered were: *Oeo e hiva e*. From time to time the priest turned the body of the dead, an act supposed to be very harmful to the family or the entire group of the murderer.

The pallets used in the above ceremony were of wood or bone, oval, and provided with a short handle. Two *rapa-ika*, one made of wood and the other of whalebone, were purchased by Thomson (215, pl. 53, figs. 3-4). The wooden specimen had cracked and the two pieces were sewn together through small holes perforated along the break. The whalebone pallet is 30 inches long and 14 inches wide. It is decorated with the incised figures of two birds traced according to the style of the tablets.